

THE BRETHREN'S EVANGELIST

A Religious Weekly,
Having the BIBLE for its Creed.

H. R. HOLSINGER.

Editor.

ASHLAND, O., SEPT., 17, 1884.

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RELIGION AND POLITICS.

We are passing through the excitement of our quadrennial campaign this fall, and while the different parties are disputing with one another concerning the superiority of their claims to the suffrages of the people, the Christian may well ask himself the question, "What is my duty as a Christian during this period of excitement, and investigation of important issues affecting the future of the Nation?" And the Christian minister may well ask this question for himself alone, as his relation to his people and society are peculiar and particularly responsible. And the same also may be said of the EVANGELIST; because a religious paper and minister of the Gospel, sustain similar relations to the people and have similar duties to perform. Both have greater responsibilities as teachers of the people, and are peculiarly circumstanced, from the fact that their audience is composed of members belonging to different political parties, and are biased by their different party affiliations. But for this latter fact religious papers and Christian ministers might discuss political issues with entire freedom. But as long as the minds of the people are biased by party prejudices, the well meant efforts of a minister or a religious journal to enlighten the people, would only be misconstrued as a partisan effort, and would result in division of the church politically. While, then, the Christian should not be a partisan politician, a Christian minister or a religious journal, must not be influenced by party.

The fact that the laity of the church is largely thus influenced, and the ministers and religious editors are not always free from it, makes it extremely dangerous for them to say anything about the political issues.

Nevertheless, the citizen, though he be a Christian, is a citizen, nevertheless, and as a citizen he has a citizen's duty to perform, and he should perform this duty, by the light of investigation, and in the fear of God.

One of these duties is to cast his vote in favor of such candidates for office, and such measures, as will promote the best interests of the Nation, and the people of the nation.

That there are sometimes questions of great moment to be decided at the polls, cannot be questioned; and to take the position, that religious people must take no practical part in the decision of these questions, would be equivalent to turning the affairs of this government over into the hands of the irreligious and wicked, and meek-

ly submit to the injustice, corruption and tyranny which such a government would impose. No Christian can afford to allow this; hence, his duty to give his practical influence in favor of the purest men and best measures. We say practical influence, for we do not believe in attempting anything impracticable, no matter how desirable the result would be if it were possible to accomplish it.

There is, however, an exception, to the rule laid down above, which we wish to mention. It sometimes occurs that a question of morality becomes mixed with politics, or, we should rather say party politics. When this occurs we have no hesitation in affirming, that the fact that the moral question, has become a party issue must not prevent the teacher of morality from discussing the moral question and denouncing its immorality. The religious teacher cannot afford to allow the devil to cloak sin or immorality with any kind of a cloak,—religious, political or otherwise,—and say, there now, touch it if you dare! And a Christian minister or journalist must not, under such circumstances, allow himself to become intimidated by such subterfuges. If he did, it would be but a short time until all the moral questions would be thus cloaked and the minister could retire for want of employment. The EVANGELIST was called into existence upon an issue involving a fearless exposition of the sins of injustice, inconsistency, and assumption of power; cloaked in sacerdotal robes; and true to its principles it will continue to denounce invasions of vice and immorality in the social, domestic and national domain; no matter under what cloak they may appear. Polygamy, sensualism, libertinism and intemperance are thus cloaked but they must be denounced, nevertheless. Polygamy though wearing a double cloak of religion and politics is a crying evil and national disgrace. It must be denounced nevertheless. Intemperance though not as yet a national issue has become a political issue in many states but it will be shown up in all its hideous deformity and direful influence nevertheless. And the religious teacher must cry out against this evil in no uncertain tones. The same is true of every other vice and immorality. We want to keep free from party prejudice in politics as well as in religion, but sin and immorality will be sought out and denounced, no matter what its hiding place may be.

HOWARD MILLER'S OPINIONS REVIEWED.

According to promise in last week's issue, we publish this week an article from the pen of Howard Miller. He nowhere in his article or correspondence calls us brother, and, lest he might take offense, we will not address him in a fraternal way, though we bear Howard no ill will. He tells us some truths with which we have already been acquainted, and advances some new ideas which we cannot accept as true, and in reviewing the whole article we are puzzled to see the point he attempts to elucidate or conceal. The first part of his article would make good reading for the columns of the Vindicator and would prove Howard an orthodox Old Order brother, if he did not spoil it a little by inserting a few words of doubt and knowledge.

In his second paragraph he states some facts and gives some good advice but throws out a few insinuations concerning the future "clerical graduate of Ashland College," which would apply as well to the German Baptist branch of the church and its schools, unless he either ignores their schools or supposes they are governed by different influences, of which he has failed to inform us.

From the third paragraph we might infer that Howard Miller is leaning toward Popery, and gives some symptoms of loyalty to annual meetings.

From his fourth paragraph we might readily infer that Howard is an outsider, and the church is a machine which has "slipped a cog" and is not of much account, and perhaps never will be.

In his fifth paragraph he speaks about the church school in which he (perhaps unwittingly) favors the progressive idea of having only one school, and to have it controlled by the church. The schools, whether few or many, should be controlled by the church. The Dayton convention has adopted Ashland College as the school of the church. He should have addressed this part of his remarks to the German Baptists. Their annual meeting does not even want their schools named after their church. From this paragraph we would conclude Howard to be a true progressive, only that he winds up by a thrust at a congressional form of church government. What does he mean by a strong central government? Does he mean a government like that of Russia—an absolute monarchy? Or does he mean a republic like the United States? If the former, we differ with him. If the latter, we agree with him. The one is the government of the Roman Catholic church, and some others. And the other is the government of that large and respectable body of Christians known as Baptists, which in the United States, scarcely ranks below any other in numbers and influence. Will H. M. say that their

theory of church government is as erroneous as the doctrine of States Rights? If so, it will appear that the doctrine of States Rights was not such a very bad doctrine after all.

With his last paragraph we agree entirely.

Finally, we guess Howard Miller means by his article, that if the church had one college, a \$2,000 or \$3,000 salaried ministry, and a strong central government, he would consent to be an active minister, college president, and the head centre of the government. What do the rest of our readers guess that he means?

QUERIES AND ANSWERS.

What has the paragraph "Never cut a tree down to gather the fruit," to do with what precedes or follows, in brother Mason's article in No. 34.

BESSIE B.

We suppose this came into his mind at the time he was writing, and therefore, we find it where it is. You will notice that brother Mason writes news items. Therefore the paragraph was in its proper place. Besides it may have a "point" that requires a little thought to see. We would recommend our correspondents to follow out this idea of writing church news in items as far as possible. They are very readable in this form.

Did Elder Joseph W. Beer have a trial in the German Baptist church, or was he expelled without a trial.

J. K. INGLEMOYER.

He was expelled by the annual meeting of 1884 while he was in California. As far as we know he was not as much as notified that they were going to bring up his case. The German Baptists have found out by experience that a public trial of those who have offended against annual meeting does not redound much to their glory, so they prefer to expel a man in his absence. Such men as Bashor and Beer would expose their practice and principles too effectually, so annual meeting took their cases in hand when they were sure they would not be there to defend themselves.

What do we understand by regeneration?

NINA FÖRRE.

It is the act of being born again. It is that act that changes a sinful, rebellious being into an obedient child of God. When the Holy Spirit takes full possession of the soul the person becomes a new creature, in fact he becomes a little child in the Lord Jesus Christ. In this process the soul undergoes a radical change. What he once hated, he now loves, and what he once loved, he now hates. There is no conversion or salvation without this re-birth. See John 3:3. This great change is caused by the power of the Holy Ghost alone, and not by any power of the man himself. He, who can create, alone can create anew.

To which branch of the church does J. H. Brinkworth belong?

JOHN H. ROCK.

To the German Baptists.

Who wrote the book of Job?

A.

You should consult a good Bible dictionary for full information. There are many opinions concerning the antiquity and authorship of this book. A great many think Job was its author, but they differ about the time when he lived. Others think it was written by Moses in Midian. There is an obscurity and mystery about the date that will probably never be cleared up in this world.

What became of the body of Moses?

J. POOL.

The Lord buried it. See Deuteronomy 34:5, 6.

Does the history of the church prove that creeds made by councils promote union in the church?

JAMES B. SANGER.

Decidedly not. All the divisions that ever took place in the Christian churches of all ages were over the rulings of councils. A few narrow minded men get together, assume power, proclaim themselves "the church," and then endeavor to enforce their opinions on the people. To this many submit from various causes. Some are careless and indifferent and are willing that the elders and bishops should do the thinking for them, and care not what is done, so they are legislated to heaven. Others again submit through superstition and ignorance. They are taught, and they believe, that it is almost unpardonable to disobey an elder, while others say nothing from cowardice. Then there are still many who will put up with anything for the sake of peace. But in the course of time, some man will be found bold and honest enough to rebel against such sacrilege and assumption. These kind of people always find others of kindred spirit. The consequence is that these things are so agitated that for the safety of the legislating body, the objecting members are ruthlessly expelled and branded as rebels, heathen and publicans. They used to burn and imprison such, but all they can do now is to expel, and then calumniate and vilify. These expulsions invariably terminate in a new church. This is about the result of council made creeds.

1. What was the council of Nice?

2. When was it held?

3. By what church?

4. And for what purpose?

JENNIE ROOK.

(1.) It was a council of Bishops of the Christian church convened by the emperor Constantine to settle certain questions. It was held at the city of Nice or Nicca, formerly a city of Bithynia in Asia Minor.

(2.) There were two councils of Nice. The first, the one to which you undoubtedly allude was held 325, A. D.

(3.) Although there was no permanent division at this time, yet it is generally recognized as belonging to the Roman Catholic church.

(4.) The principle object was to settle the questions arising from the Arian controversy. However there was other important business transacted.

I am an outsider, and I do not want to belong to a church that is guilty of such work as locking church doors against those who helped to build them. The German Baptists say that the Mandatory law is done away with, and also the Dress rule, and that they are no longer governed by their annual meeting rules. Is this so?

J. E. HAMILTON.

Do not believe a word of it. This is only a subterfuge of some policy people who would retain, even at the cost of principle and truth, those who are dissatisfied with annual meeting rulings. Those who have made such an assertion should at once be reported to the nearest, strict annual meeting Elder, and he would not dare repeat such an assertion with impunity. The idea of such a thing! If such were the case, would it not be superlative absurdity and wickedness to meet year after year, at such enormous expense, and make laws they do not expect to enforce? Why, it was only at their last conference, this year, that they expelled Elder J. W. Beer, because he would not be governed by their rulings. We would advise you to ask the Gospel Messenger, Mount Morris, Ill., this question, and desire them to reply through their paper. Then you will get their word for it; that is, if they dare to answer it. Try them. It would be a great satisfaction for many of their members to have a straight forward answer to this question. Then, again, we can recommend Elders R. H. Miller, Enoch Eby, John Wise, and we would even like to hear Elder James Quinter's views on this. If this should be the case, why do they not make some motion toward undoing some of the unjust work they have been guilty of? It is true that some of their ministers and lay members are ashamed of the work of their annual meeting, and would have you believe these things. Some congregations tolerate and wink at the disobediences of their members, but it is in direct defiance of their ruling power. This power dare not enforce its own laws to-day. Believe it not. Be sure you write to the Gospel Messenger.

How do you explain the "borrowing" the Israelites did from the Egyptians when they left Egypt, (Exodus 11:2) on the principles of honesty?

DAVID KAUFMAN.

Dr. James G. Murphy in his commentary on Exodus says the original Hebrew word means ask and not borrow. We will give you his note on chapter 3:22, which I believe, we can all endorse:

"The Israelites are not to go out empty-handed. The sojourn of Joseph in Egypt as a bond-slave had been the means of persevering the inhabitants of that country from extermination by a seven years' famine. The residence of his kindred in Goshen had always been a benefit, and not a burden, to Egypt. And for the last two or three generations, the Israelites had been bondslaves, toiling for the prosperity and aggrandizement of the nation. They had, therefore, an undoubted right to ask, and the Egyptians were eventually glad to give them some aid for their journey. Shall ask as a gift, if not for a compensation, for long unrequited services. The word cannot mean to borrow here, when the Egyptians were perfectly aware that the Israelites would not return. Offer that sojourneth in her house, either a visitor or a mistress whom she served, in any case her superior, and perhaps owner. The Egyptians would be so overcome by abject distress as to be ready to part with a considerable portion of their wealth, in order to get rid of a people whose presence menaced them utter extermination."

Americans may be interested to learn how much good is being done in Europe by the distribution of the Bible. A missionary writes that a friend of his while at a fair in France fell in with a giddy and dissipated young man, in whose hand he placed a Bible. The young fellow not only read his Bible, but he studied it and was converted. Now he has opened a mission hall, where such a thing was formerly unheard of; and who knows where the results of this simple action of presenting a Bible will end? A farmer who had become a convert through the same humble means, had his house burned down. In building a new dwelling he went to the expense of adding to it a hall wherein his neighbors may assemble to listen to the truth he himself has found so precious.